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SAPPHO.

The question of a year has been decided in a night. *Sappho* was presented at Covent Garden on Saturday, under the new title of *Sappho*. Change of name did not involve change of nature. *Sappho* remained *Sappho* to all intents and purposes. The difference was between the Paris and London audiences. At the Royal Italian Opera there is no organised *claque*; at the Theatre de la Nation there is a close phalanx of four rows in the centre of the *parterre*. The close phalanx of four rows in the centre of the *parterre* helped *Sappho* to a few nights of lingering existence, which *Sappho* in London may look for in vain, since our theatres (*Dieu merci!*) enjoy no such artificial means of prolonging life. In Paris the mock-enthusiasm of the "middle rows" may for a space light up the eye-holes of a *caput mortuum*; in London the skeleton falls prostrate, like the head of Ozymandias, not the ghost of a torch to illumine its forehead with an evanescent flash. As the effigy in stone of him who said,

" My name is Ozymandias, king of kings,"

now reposes on the strand—legs erect, yet trunkless, its shattered visage buried in the sands, a mutilated emblem of mortality—so *Sappho*, headless and recumbent, shall sleep in the desert of oblivion, now henceforward, and for ever—the semipaternal memory of a sham.

" Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains."

It was a chivalrous notion of our excellent friend, M. Augier—who has immortalised himself in the simple prattle of a child (*Gabrielle*)—to exalt the character of *Sappho*. *Sappho* was renowned for her beauty, and her poetic fire; but *Sappho* was not renowned for her purity. M. Augier, however, has cleaned her of all earthliness, and placed her on the modern boards, a vestal, burning with a holy flame. Phaon, too, a boatman, who rowed the goddess Venus across the sea—when, disguised in the wrinkles of age, the Paphian deity was bound on mission into Asia—and who received as his guerdon a cosmetic, with which having rubbed himself, he became as comely as erst he was unlovely, rises from the pen and ink of the French poet, a sort of hybrid Pollio, still duller and more insipid than that dullest and most insipid of proconsuls. Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, stirred up for the occasion into a tyrannical despot behind the scenes, is made the bugbear of the story. A drivelling idiot, Pythias, always amorous and always drunk, and Gly-

cere, a jealous wanton, are the lock and key that open the door to the intrigue, by means whereof Phaon is banished from his country, and *Sappho* precipitated from a rock—a rock which the ready Mr. Grieve, well versed in classical lore, has boldly entitled Leucas. The other personage, Alceus the poet, *Sappho*'s lover—metamorphosed into her rival by M. Augier—is the key-stone of the conspiracy against Pittacus, wherein Phaon is concerned, which Pythias discloses to Glycere, and Glycere employs adroitly enough to gratify her passion for Phaon, and consummate her revenge upon *Sappho*—*Sappho*, who, perfuse of eloquence, had robbed her of the loose affections of the boatman. These are the materials which M. Augier has worked up into three dreary acts, each in itself sufficient to stretch the public mouth into a yawn.

The day is surely over when such a subject as *Sappho* could interest, either in a drama or an opera. Perhaps, however, if a great poet took it in hand, for Rachel, something might be made of it; but no other than that incomparable artist, who elevates whatever she approaches, could endow the personage of the Greek lyrist with reality, and make her pass current for solid flesh and circling blood. It was, therefore, a grave mistake on the part of M. Augier, M. Gounod, and all concerned in the matter, to select such a theme for an opera in three acts. Moreover, M. Augier has not done his task cleverly. We could pardon his violations of history and tradition, if they were productive of good effect; but nothing can be more vapid, cold, and spiritless than the conspiracy which is the pivot of the action. Some of the incidents are absolutely silly. Take, for example, the manner in which the plot is discovered. The conspirators cast dice for the honourable position of Pittacus' assassin. The chance falls to Phaon, who, with the others, signs a manifesto, which Phaon confides to Pythias—*because he is the richest*—to "have it well copied by two faithful slaves." Pythias, inflamed with wine, and desirous of seducing Glycere to his will, confides the secret and the scroll to her keeping. Can anything be more absurd? The conspirators must have been either intoxicated or beside themselves to make so light of a document so precious. Phaon's position in the second act is ludicrous. At the instigation of Glycere, who holds the fate of the Mytilenean in her keeping, *Sappho* is compelled to declare falsely that her love for Phaon is extinct; whereupon, as soon as the words are uttered, Phaon, who must needs have a *compagnon de voyage*, in his banishment,

turns round coolly to Glycere, and proposes that she shall go with him instead! Oh! Emile Augier—Oh! *Gabrielle!*—Oh! *Phaon!*—Oh! *Columns!*

To conclude abruptly—the libretto of *Sapho* offers some good situations for musical colouring, but is tedious, unnatural, and void of dramatic interest. It is M. Augier's first failure; let us hope it may be his last.

Of M. Gounod we would rather say nothing; but duty forces us to the unpleasant task of condemning the music of *Sapho* without reserve. A work more full of pretension and more empty of merit we never heard. We confess ourselves wholly at a loss to account for the admiration of those who announced it beforehand as something *hors ligne*, as an inspiration of the highest genius and originality. We can find nothing in it whatever but a series of incoherent passages and clumsy experiments. Here and there a bit of melody, broken on the wheel of fantastic conceit, and here and there a pretty, occasionally a novel, effect in the orchestral accompaniments, and we have named all that intense curiosity and a zealous search for beauties enabled us to pick out from the waste of weeds and rubbish that constitutes the garden of M. Gounod's muse. The verdict of two audiences (on Saturday and Tuesday), delivered in silent indifference, absolves us, however, from further protest against a mistake which is now, as the French say, *constaté*, beyond further dispute. We shall never forget the dullness that folded the house in its embraces on Saturday night. Almost every one appeared to be dozing; till at the end the audience dispersed in mute unsociability, without exchanging comment or remark, like a party of somnambulists, with rigid mien, and eyeballs fixed, marching unconsciously towards some unknown goal.

Jam satis! Henceforth let not our prophecies be questioned. We are never wrong. Why should we be? Clad in the armour of faith, we brandish the spear of truth, and hold up the shield of conviction. None can hurt us. Nor do we desire to hurt others; but with the best good-will we take leave of M. Gounod, sincerely hoping that his second opera may deserve and obtain a more favourable reception than *SAPHO* in Paris, and *SAFFO* in London. *Vivat Regina!*

Reviews of Music.

"DIE LANDSCHAFT,"—IMPROVITU—HENRY WYLD. R. Mills.

An exceedingly well-written and sparkling *étude* in E, displaying both good musicianship and taste. As an useful exercise, *pour délier les doigts* (unbind the fingers), we can strongly recommend it; equally so as a short, agreeable, and sensible piece of music.

"LE MANCELILLIER,"—SERENADE POUR LE PIANO—L. M. GOTTSCHALK. Schott & Co.

If there were as much variety in the style of this piece as in the marks and indications of expression, there would be considerable variety in this piece. This piece, professing to represent the "Mancelillier,"—a tree, or a gum—must be regarded in the light

of a piece representing a tree or a gum—so to speak, the tear of a tree. The style of this piece is monotonous, and we think a more appropriate title would be "Mandrake." This piece is in G sharp minor, and no mistake; although it diverges enharmonically at divers reprisals into A flat major, which is dedicated to Madame Menrechet de Barival, by the author, who is from Louisiana, and must have been in a melancholy mood when he wrote this piece. What feelings a man may experience sitting in summer beneath the shade of a "Mancelillier," supposing it be large enough to sit under in summer, this piece may possibly indicate. For our own parts, we find this piece lugubrious, and are therefore loth to recommend it as a diversion for ordinary occasions, whatever we might feel inclined to do for extraordinary occasions. This piece is one of many musical illustrations of trees and gums indigenous to the slave states, but we cannot pronounce it a lively specimen of its composers.

"THE LEONORA WALTZES"—DEDICATED TO THE BARONESS REHAUSEN—G. A. DURLACHER. Charles Ollivier.

A lively, and agreeable, and useful set of waltzes, in the usual form of introduction and coda. There is rather too much similarity between the two first figures, but the others are well contrasted, and the coda is spirited and effective.

"THE MOUNTAIN ECHO"—"THE SONG OF THE ALPINE HUNTER"—WORDS BY FREDERICK MORTON—MUSIC BY ROBERT GUYLOTT.

Webb's Music Saloon.

The only characteristic of Mr. Guylott's song is vivacity, but in his vivacity the composer should have endeavoured to steer clear of the *chant de chasse* in *Guillaume Tell*, to which the tune bears too strong a resemblance to be purely accidental.

"SEVENTH CONCERTO FOR THE VIOLIN,"—CH. DE BERIOT.

Schott and Co.

Any contribution from the pen of M. de Beriot, the head and front of the Great Belgian School of the violin, must be acceptable to the professors and amateurs of the king of instruments. The seventh concerto of M. de Beriot is not a concerto properly speaking, but, properly speaking, a concertino. The first movement, in G major, does not come to a close, but conducts by a half-close into the second, a kind of *romanza* in B minor, *andante tranquillo*, which, in its turn, refuses to come to a full close, but by a mixed close conducts to the last movement, a *rondo* in G major, the original key. Each of the movements is good of its kind. The themes are broad, melodious, and well opposed, either to other; the plan clear, simple, and musicianlike; the accompaniments rich and satisfactory, though perfectly unelaborate; and the whole bears the indelible stamp of the master. As in all the compositions of M. de Beriot, the evidences of a great school are apparent. The passages are remarkable for their brilliancy, fluency, and effect, and admirably adapted for study, or the display of proficient executancy. It is unnecessary for us to recommend the concerto, since the name of the composer will insure its reception wide and far.

FIDELIO.

(Continued from our last.)

Having now detailed every particular of the action of *Fidelio*, and examined minutely how this action is illustrated by the music, how not a point of character, not a demonstration of feeling, scarcely the expression of a single word is disregarded by the composer, we can with better justice to our subject, to our readers, and to ourselves, than we could have done at the commencement of these papers, before we had furnished matter for reference in our remarks on the plot of the opera of Beethoven's musical interpretation of it, and made our readers familiar with the same, enter into an analysis of the several overtures which, with different intentions and with different success, all most powerfully indicate the story and the principal characters in it, and thus each would appropriately preface the work.

The four overtures to this opera form at once a most valuable study to the musician, and a highly interesting example both of the gradual development of some of Beethoven's loftiest thoughts, and of his excessive care in perfecting their arrangement. They furnish also a striking proof of the high esteem in which our composer must have held his opera, since we may well suppose that had he not been fully satisfied with it as a whole, he would not have rejected so many truly beautiful ideas, and spent so much pains in writing and rewriting to complete an overture that should content him as the finishing stroke of so important a work.

Schindler, the biographer of our great master, indulges himself in a certain amount of twaddlesome gossip that purports to be a history of these four compositions; but his account is so distinctly marked with all the characteristic of irreality that nothing less than a condition of the most unfeigned amateurishness with the disposition to seek wonders in everything, and to create where it fails to discover them, and to worship with credulous idolatry, indifferent whether it have found or created—nothing short of such a condition could render one capable of receiving this account with any degree of attention, much less of respect. Beethoven's inadequate historian tells us, that the first overture, when privately rehearsed at the house of Prince Lichnowsky, was found to be too light for the subject—that the second was found to be too difficult for wind instruments—that the third was found to be too difficult for string instruments (whence we are to infer that the composer had gained so little by his long experience as to leave him, after the production of four symphonies, and many other works of magnitude, ignorant of the various capabilities of the several instruments in the orchestra)—and that the fourth, which is, whatever be its merits, certainly the least strikingly characteristic, or, as the favourite phrase is, descriptive of the persons and incidents of the opera, was found to strike the fortunate balance between levity and elaboration. That Beethoven may have had a private trial of his first overture, and have been discontented with its effect, or dissatisfied as to its fitness for the subject, is likely enough from the fact of his having composed a second; but the story of the too great lightness of this first composition is sufficiently disproved by the much greater lightness in the character of all the subjects, and in the general effect of the fourth, which, it is pretended, so happily attains the standard of gravity, as, on this account, to supersede the other productions. The story of the too great difficulty for wind instruments in the second overture is disproved by the greater difficulty of many passages in the third than of any in the previous production. That of the too great difficulty for string instruments in the third overture is disproved by the equal difficulty in the fourth; and both these last stories are rendered absurd by a comparison of the overtures with the rest of the opera, when they will be found to present no particular difficulty that is not quite in keeping with the general style of writing for all the instruments throughout the work. The internal evidence of the compositions themselves suggests this conjecture of their probable history, namely, that Beethoven felt his brain to be pregnant with a more extensive, a more elaborate, and in all respects a grander illustration of what must have been a heart's favourite subject with him, than was fulfilled in the first overture, which we are much disposed to regard, from the smallness of the score, from the abruptness of the conclusion, and from other indications of haste in the plan, and in the instrumentation, as a purely experimental work, written hastily to take advantage of some particular occasion when some opportunity offered for its private trial and judgment—that this more extensive, more elaborate, and grander illustration of his subject was embodied in the second overture, but that the ideas which this overture comprised were still immature, the embodiment was not yet ripe, and their production, in fact, served but as a sketch for that which followed it;—that the third overture realised the utmost of the composer's intentions that were unfulfilled in the second, which we trace entirely in its remodelled and greatly modified form; but we trace it as we do the infant in the man, the first conception in the perfect execution; and lastly, that this great overture in C having been found to exceed the necessary limits and proportions, and to fail in some of the requisite essentials of a theatrical overture, Beethoven, in a fit of disgust, or of what, in a less pre-eminently great man, would be called fretful peevishness, resolved, for the reproduction

of his opera, under its new title of *Fidelio*, to write a fourth overture, that should differ from the other three in every possible particular (even in the key, which in those first three is the same), and to level his thoughts with the exigencies of his occasion; and we have here the interesting advantage of a treatment of the subject so different from all that he had previously produced, as if it had proceeded from another composer; and in this treatment of the subject, and the entirely new aspect under which himself must have considered it, and which was necessary to the production of so distinctly separate a composition, he was doubtless favoured by the lapse of time that passed between the production of this and the first three overtures, which were doubtless written under one feeling and at one period. Let us see whether an analysis of the several compositions supports this hypothesis; begging that, if we appear somewhat fantastic in our guesses at the possible meaning of the composer, we may be understood rather as wishing to indicate where a meaning is to be seen than as presumptuously, much less positively, offering our rendering of it as the true one.

The first overture, according to the unexceptionable precedent of Mozart, is in the same key as the last finale—a precedent of which we find ourselves to be involuntary admirers, since, to our feeling, there is about a work, whether longer or shorter, which is so constructed, an air of completeness that is greatly wanting in a composition that commences in one key and ends in another; an air of completeness that seems to bind the whole together as a whole, instead of leaving its several portions as so many separate, self-complete pieces, which, without such a chain of connection, they must always, to a certain extent, appear.

This overture commences with an introductory andante that is obviously intended to be entirely descriptive; and though as descriptive music we find in it very great interest, as music apart from description we find in it but little attraction. The sustained unison, on the dominant, suggests the vague feeling of lonely hopelessness in which we may suppose Leonore, the young, the passionate, the all-devoted wife, when Florestan, also young, and noble, and chivalrous—the husband of her heart—has by some unknown power been snatched from her. She is ignorant of his destiny; the only thing that supports her in her solitary misery is an indefinite feeling that he may, that he must live, and that Pizarro, whom he has disgraced, may be a clue to his discovery. The mysterious passages for the violins alone suggests her looking abroad into the wide, the vacant world vainly for redress, vainly for consolation, and her being thrust back upon herself, in whom she finds the only representative of her absent husband lover, to assure her of his faith, his love, and to stimulate her to endurance in honour of his memory. So, the second long-sustained dominant note, with now an increased number of instruments; then a portion of the violin passage resumed, but now with full harmony; and this to us denotes a purpose formed. The repetition of this phrase in another key by wind-instruments suggests the confirmation of a resolution, and the extended series of scales and arpeggios divided between the string-instruments, and interspersed with short plaintive phrases for wind-instruments, may well be meant to depict her entering with that worst kind of despair, the nullity of hope, upon her arduous and anxious search for her beloved, and the pangs of anguish to which this subjects her. We may then suppose, in the scale of C, where all the string instruments join in unison, an expected approach to the object of her heart's longing—the passage in which the first violins, in alternation with the other instruments, form a kind of inverted pedal over a harmony that very unsatisfactorily wanders between the keys of C minor, and B flat, and E flat (which is, indeed, according to our judgment, a beautiful thought ill expressed)—this passage, we conjecture, may signify the quick and strong pulsations of her dilating bosom as she still expects that she reaches nearer and nearer to the attainment of her one great, loving desire; and here the break in the motion, the stop upon the A flat for the sad passage in single notes and in slower measure, represents her turning away from a disappointment choked with a sorrow that she may not, dare not, utter. The short phrase of melody in C minor suggests to us Leonore again alone, hopeless, powerless, with an almost breaking heart. The unisonous passage of triplets that breaks out of this suggests her indignation at her own despair, which now assumes the cha-

racter of recklessness in place of hopelessness, of caring for nothing in place of expecting nothing. The passage which brings us to the half close on G, with the triplet arpeggios for the violoncellos, suggests to us her appealing to her own presentiments with the fruitless question, "Oh, whither?" And now we may imagine that she arrives for the first time at the prison, and her presentiment—or, if you will, the almost supernatural power of magnetism that chains her to the spot—answers the inquiry of her vague desires, "Rest here."

The dominant passage that introduces the allegro, and indeed continues for the first sixteen bars of this movement, suggests once more the eager impatience of an almost fulfilled desire; but now the forcible throbings of the anxious heart come from a more healthful impulse than before; we now feel that there is true, fervent expectation, confident though perhaps groundless, whereas then, although we could find no other word to express it, we had more the feeling of that hectic offspring of desire which assumes the lustrous freshness of expectancy, though in truth it be but a morbid wish, having not even the transient, or, at best, the fragile vigour of a fondled hope. Now we have the irresistible impulse, the "innere Triebe" of Leonore's aria with all its force in the very exciting subject in C major; another dominant passage denotes the confirmed expectation that strengthens the impulse, and the impulse, urging our heroine to more and more endurance, is expressed in the resumption of the subject. A vigorous, continuous, and always melodious prolongation of this subject brings us to D as the dominant of G, and here immediately commences the second subject, or, to speak better in the present instance, that series of phrases which constitutes the dominant portion of the movement. The digression from the key of the dominant which takes place in the course of this is worthy examination; it is striking though by no means singular, having precedent in Mozart and in earlier works of Beethoven himself; it consists of a natural transition through G minor into B flat, which last is made to take considerable importance, and a gradual return to the starting place of G major, and this is so arranged as to have all the startling effect of entire novelty and to form a happy relief from the else very long prevalence of the key of G minor, without in the least taking the character of an extraneous, unnatural, or irrelative modulation. The opening phrase of this dominant subject, or, we should describe it better as the first of this series of subjects, is an unrestrained, and spontaneous, and truly beautiful outpouring of passionate expression; it indicates a lofty and a great enthusiasm, and it can scarcely fail to excite one. The very exciting effect of the syncopated passage with which it opens, the change to the minor with a continuance of the same passage, the interruption of the cadence and the prolongation of the rhythm, by the repetition of a phrase in which the employment of the dominant ninth is conspicuously beautiful, and the rapturous effect of the transition to B flat major, are each a point to prompt a cry of admiration, and, unitedly, cannot fail to carry away with them the feelings of all whose hearts are open to the influence of this highest order of expression. All this depicts, not the sorrows, not the endurance, not the convulsive ebullition of hopes which are the parents of disappointment, but the love, the glowing, the devoted passion of the heroine, and depicts it with a truthful fervour that proves how almighty is the power of musical expression. The long unisonous passage commencing in B flat, and leading to an inversion of the dominant harmony of G minor, brings before us the evil principle, shows Leonore willlessly depressed by the presence of Pizarro, feeling intuitively that he influences her destiny, but having no more than an indistinct foreboding of what part he has fulfilled in the tragedy of her life. The bright effect of the reentry of the major key, the recurrence to a portion of the chief subject of the movement, the impassioned passage of syncopation that grows out of this in continuation, the increased intensity of this passage by means of its recommendation from an unusual and quite unexpected point, its prolongation by a bold and exciting passage in unison, the recurrence again to the opening subject and the gradual dying away of this, form a beautiful coda to the first part, and suggest the continuance of the metaphysical design of the overture, in a manner so striking that we think it can scarcely be mistaken. We have the triumph of Leonore's ever sustaining

impulse over every discouragement, over every trial, over every wavering weakness that characterises woman's nature; we have the exultation in anticipated success rising to the rapture of almost certainty, and we have again the impulse which has led her through so much, which will lead her through all, lulling the perturbations of her agitated heart with assuring encouragement; lastly we have her falling into the soft sleep of silent satisfaction, that satisfaction which is the child of resolution and the parent of confidence.

The two very unceremonious bars with pauses that take us at once without gradation, or without preparation into the key of E flat, have to us rather the appearance of being introduced for convenience, for the sake of bringing about the change of key, than for any effect, musical or descriptive, that they were to produce: and here it is we think it allowable to surmise that Beethoven may have designed, had he been content with the general effect of this overture, to have extended the plan, and to have introduced the elaborations of a second part in which he is so eminently successful, in the total absence of which the present composition forms an almost individual exception from the rest of his works. All we can devise of meaning in these two bars (the thought is somewhat whimsical, pray excuse it if it be irrelevant), all we can devise is a kind of scene-shifting, as though it should be said, "Enough of Leonore, there are other things to take our attention which she has occupied quite long enough for her share, and now we will proceed to Florestan in his dungeon!" and so like the changing the scenes in a theatre, or the leaving one set of characters in a most interesting crisis to return to another of which we have heard nothing for the last dozen of chapters in a novel, we find ourselves suddenly transported into an entirely new range of ideas, to which we must accommodate ourselves accordingly. We have now an adagio which is to be regarded as a kind of episode in the movement. This commences with the slow movement of Florestan's aria, where he laments that happiness has fled from him in the spring-days of his life. There is a curious effect of rhythm from the extension of the third bar of this melody into two which, as it is here done, to our appreciation much enforces the expression and enhances the purport of the phrase. This melody is repeated with a florid arpeggio accompaniment for the violins and violoncellos, but this time without the prolonged rhythm. A strange, dreamy thought, conveyed by iterated chords for wind instruments on the unaccented notes of the measure, expresses to us the prisoner trying to abstract himself from the consciousness of his sorrows, from the sense of his wrongs, from the feeling of his solitude, and finding beyond these nothing but an empty blank in the whole realm of thought; then we have in another key the first phrase of his song of complaint, then again the thought of wondering vacancy that leads to another reprisal of the first phrase of the melody in again another key, which indicates that however he may seek to fly it, however it may change its colour, the one, the constant, the ever-during regret will still be the uninterrupted companion of his lonesome cell. This time, however, the complaining phrase is prolonged, and, gradually extending itself into another current of thought, is lost at last in the happy idea of Leonore's passionate and faithful love; this is obviously suggested by the introduction of a prominent phrase of the second subject of the overture, and the almost imperceptible stealing in upon this of the dominant passage that opens the principal movement which now enters in the return to the allegro in the original key of C major, and the regular recapitulation of the first part.

The subjects are here brought much closer together than before; the first subject leads to the dominant harmony on G, instead of on D as at first, and so is brought in the second subject, Leonore's fanning with the wings of her desire the fire of her own most pure though ardent passion, in the original key of the movement with the digression, now through C minor into E flat. Then we find her again borne down by the magnetic influence of Pizarro's presence; but this striking and characteristic passage instead of leading, now, to a triumphant burst in the major key, conveying the thought of a proud defiance of such metaphysical influence over her mind, arising from the determination to subject all physical influences to the love-might of her will, instead of now leading to this, the passage may be said to wind away through a considerably

extended intricacy until it steals into the key of C major, where commences a coda differing entirely from that which closes the first part.

We have now a long crescendo formed on a phrase of the principal subject, repeated alternately on the time of the dominant harmony,—this must be Leonore's "innere Triebe," impelling her now to the last, the greatest of all her noble acts of true devotion and heroic love. The climax of this crescendo is a powerful passage for the whole orchestra, that must, undoubtedly, have been the germ of a passage on most of the same harmonies that forms a most important feature in the second overture, and, like all the good points of this composition, is introduced in the third. This indicates, of course, the ultimate success of our heroine's long and arduous search, and the passage from Florestan's aria where he sees an angel in the form of Leonore, given with the full force of the orchestra presents to us the rapturous ecstasies of his clasping her in his arms. After a pause on the dominant, which we may suppose a breathing place in the transport of the lovers' tumultuous delight, our old dominant passage triumphantly introduces once more the chief subject, as though Leonore should exclaim, "All is accomplished!" and this gradually dies away, as we may imagine she begins calmly and dispassionately to recount to her regained husband the long story of her many trials; and it dies and dies until it seems to melt into the oblivious dreaminess of a half-remembered tale, and then, as though the composer feared his audience might go to sleep with his tale, and, like Charles the Twelfth at the end of *Mazeppa*, prove to have had all the thrilling interest of the story and the beautiful poetry to boot thrown away upon them, we have four thumping chords of C for the whole orchestra that cry out most wordfully, "Wake up my friends, we are going to begin the opera," and thus abruptly, quaintly, and, we think, not quite satisfactorily, nor agreeably, the overture, and our comments on it, close together.

G. A. M.

ALBONI'S MARIA.

(From the *Morning Chronicle*.)

MDLLE. ALBONI's *Figlia del Reggimento* has so many charming points about it that we can afford to forgive its want of dramatic vividness. Mdlle. Alboni is one of that very small band of vocalists whom the town is content—nay, delighted—to hear, no matter under what circumstances. Her exquisite voice is always welcome, and we should be worse than ungrateful to cavil, after an evening of such very high gratification as any one of her appearances affords. The difficulty Alboni must have felt in dealing with the part of Maria is physical, and arises from a *spécialité* with which it would be worse than ungenerous to quarrel. The overflowing good nature and *bonhomie* so palpably characteristic of the great artist interfere with the lights and shades of the character. Half petulant, half affectionate, and wholly impulsive, the *Daughter of the Regiment* is essentially a different person from the placid-looking lady who now takes the *rôle* in question. The self-willed child of the soldiery becomes in her hands far too amiable a being, whose wildest manifestation of temper is an occasional inclination to *bouder* when much crossed. And when the pet of the regiment is elevated into ladyhood, instead of struggling with her satin fetters, Alboni seems only to utter a quiet protest against being bored with them, and in the very singing lesson (constructed for the display of selfwill), she is too conscious of her powers to perform that, or anything else that may be required of her, to make any violent fuss about it. How, therefore, can we cite as a blemish what really ought to be considered a merit? And how, again, can anybody quarrel with the personation, when he comes fresh from the incessant gush of melody poured out by Alboni? Exquisitely facile and flowing, her

execution glitters with ornament, affixed in most artistic fashion. The whole performance is a triumph of vocalism, achieved by an organ of which it is impossible to speak with too fervent admiration. If Alboni do not add a leaf to her laurels by her *Figlia*, she certainly does not lose one.

MADEMOISELLE ANNA ZERR.

We copy the following from the letter of the Austrian correspondent of the *Times*, which appeared yesterday:—"Although my letter has attained an unusual length I cannot refrain from informing you of what happened to Miss Anna Zerr, the *prima donna*, on her arrival from London. She received orders from the Lord Chamberlain to return her diploma as Hofkammer Sangerinn (singer in the *petits appartements* of the Court), and, as a further proof of loss of favour, she will not be permitted to sing in the Imperial Opera-house during the year, for which she is engaged. The crime committed by Miss Zerr was the having consented to sing for the benefit of the Hungarian refugees in England."

Let the charming singer come back to London, and she will have an uproarious reception.

M. GOUNOD'S SAFFO.

[Having elsewhere offered some observations on the opera of *Saffo*, it is enough here to reprint the following notice of its first performance from the *Times* of Monday, with every word of which we fully agree.—ED. M. W.]

On Saturday night a new opera in three acts, entitled *Saffo*, the music by M. Charles Gounod, was produced, with every advantage which the resources of the theatre could bestow, but with a degree of success by no means flattering to the author and composer.

It is only within the last twelve months that there has been any question of M. Gounod, although more than ten years ago, a pupil of Halevy, at the Paris Conservatoire, he gained the "prize de Rome," invested with which most indiscriminate of honorary diplomas, he travelled to Italy in quest of classic inspirations. Afterwards, imbibing an ecclesiastical turn, M. Gounod began to compose for the Church; and some of his sacred pieces were brought forward by the enterprising Mr. Hullah, at one of the "Monthly Concerts," in St. Martin's Hall, last winter. These were criticised as crude and undigested efforts, and on being repeated at a subsequent performance, did not succeed in creating a more favourable impression. M. Gounod has also written a symphony, and other works, for the orchestra, besides a variety of songs, for voice and piano, which have enjoyed an enormous reputation in certain quarters. Indeed, it may be considered unfortunate that M. Gounod should have stepped over the barriers of the social circle to submit his pretensions to the judgment of the world, which, being indifferent, will, we apprehend, go far to reverse the opinions of his friends. So great, however, was the private repute of M. Gounod, and so loud and continuous were the praises of his intimate acquaintances, that the noise of his fame penetrated through the walls of the "Grand Opera," and reached the ears of M. Roqueplan, who pledged himself to bring out an opera, of which M. Emile Augier (author of *Gabrielle*) was to construct the *libretto*, and Madame Pauline Viardot Garcia to sustain the principal character. Here was a chance seldom accorded to a beginner—for M. Gounod, in spite of the lapse of ten years since the "prize de Rome," was a beginner in the

dramatic field of composition. *Sapho* was first represented at the French lyric theatre on the 16th of April, 1851, with how much success may be surmised from the fact that, up to the present moment, nearly four months since, it has been played seven times. But Mademoiselle Masson, a clever and popular singer, having proved her competence to sustain the part of the heroine, in the absence of its original representative, there was no apparent obstacle to the "run" of *Sapho*, which leads to the natural conclusion that there must be a deficiency somewhere. Let us endeavour to point it out.

As in the Italian version of *Sapho* ("adapted" by Signor Fontana, "edited and translated" by Signor Maggioni) the style and merits of M. Augier's versification, and doubtless most of the poetical ideas, have inevitably deteriorated, we shall confine our observations to the plot. The story of Sappho, more especially the episode of her passion for Phaon, the Mytilenean boatman, whom the Paphian goddess made comely by an ointment, has been often used as a vehicle for music, but rarely with success. La Barre, Rameau, Piccini, Martini, Mayer, Reicha, and Pacini, have all composed operas on the subject. The last, the *Saffo* of Pacini, is alone remembered now, but its merits are so slight, that, in all probability it will soon be gathered to its predecessors in oblivion, and we fear M. Augier has at best supplied the wings for another musical ephemera, to appear and perish in an equally brief space. We cannot compliment the elegant author of *Gabrielle* on his plan of a book for music. His *Sapho* might have been turned into a pretty poem, but it makes a very dull *libretto*. In the first act, at the Olympian games, Alceus and Sappho contend for the poetical prize. He sings of liberty, she of love, and the palm is awarded to Sappho. Phaon, whose heart but now was with the courtesan Glycere, while his esteem was with Sappho, inflamed by the eloquence of the poetess, transfers his affections to her. Meanwhile Alceus is organizing a conspiracy against Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, metamorphosed into a tyrant for the occasion. In the second act, Pythias, a Lesbian, given to wine, and a *mauvais sujet* into the bargain, betrays the secret of the conspiracy to Glycere, the courtesan, who resolves to make use of it to regain the love of Phaon, and revenge herself upon Sappho. Phaon, designated by lot to take the life of Pittacus, has signed a manifesto, and confided it to Pythias, on the pretext that the latter, being the richest, can best afford to "get it copied." Possessed of this document, Glycere menaces Sappho with disclosing the matter to Pittacus. To save her lover, Sappho feigns that her affection for him no longer exists, and, to save himself, Phaon submits to banishment with Glycere, in whose company he philosophically consoles himself for the fickleness of Sappho. In the third and last act the abandoned Sappho watches the departure of Phaon and his companions; falls into a swoon, which endures long enough for a shepherd to sing a song, to the accompaniment of his pipes; awakes; apostrophises her lyre; climbs up a rock; and ultimately throws herself into the sea. A more uninteresting *libretto* could not well be imagined, nor one less suited to music.

We regret to be unable to record that M. Gounod has justified the eulogiums lavished on him in advance. On the contrary, he has failed to sustain his forced position. The characteristics of his music are want of melody, indecision of style, ineffective treatment of voices, inexperience in the use of instruments, accompanied by an affectation of originality disclosed in strange and unsuccessful experiments, excess of modulation, monotonous in itself and proceeding from inability to develop phrases, contempt of established forms, and a general absence of continuity, vexing the ear with beginnings that rarely arrive at consummation. Against

these drawbacks we are able to tender but few compensating qualities. We are sorry for it; but our duty is to say the truth, however unpalatable, to ourselves, as to others. M. Gounod has to learn that quaintness is not originality, that meagreness is not simplicity, and that noise is not richness. The continual strain upon the voices, as much in the choral and concerted music as in the airs and recitatives, is alike wearing to the audience and executants. The introduction of the first act has a certain vigour, which leads to the anticipation of something better than what follows. Phaon's air, too, describing his remembrance of Glycere, has a graceful melody, which, more naturally developed, would have made a beautiful song. This is the most attractive piece in the opera, although the *encore* was in a great measure owing to the perfect singing of Signor Tamberlik, who exerted himself, throughout a most arduous and ungrateful part, with a zeal, energy, and talent that entitled him to unqualified praise. An air, written for Madame Castellan (Glycere) now introduced into the opera for the first time, ends with a *cabaletta*, which is nothing better than a feeble copy of Verdi. The choruses by the priests and the people at the temple, when Alceus and Sappho contend, are confused and ineffective. The address to liberty, by the former, and the legend of Hero and Leander, by the latter, gave occasion for musical expression and contrast, of which M. Gounod has neglected to avail himself. His music is flat, dull, and wholly devoid of rhythmical tune, except in the last movement of the Sapphic improvisation—a *cabaletta* in the style of Pacini, and singularly out of keeping. The duet in which Saffo and Phaon protest their mutual love expresses little or nothing; while the final chorus, so much lauded, is another noisy essay after the manner of Verdi. The second act is, if anything, feebler than the first. The chorus, "Gloria a Bacco," and the drinking song of Pythias, are common-place and devoid of character. In the trio for the conspirators the martial movement, "Noi giuriam morte," would be better if the voices were not so ardently taxed; the *encore*, however, was due to the ability of the chief executants—Tamberlik, Tamburini, and Maralti. By far the most effective piece in this act is the duet in which Glycere obtains the secret and the manifesto of the conspirators from Pythias. The last movement of this has some really charming passages, and pretty instrumental effects. The whole was admirably sung and acted with the utmost spirit by Madame Castellan and Signor Tamburini. The trio for Sappho, Glycere, and Phaon, comprehending the triumph of the courtesan and the despair of the poetess, forced by her unrelenting rival to deny her love for Phaon, is the longest, but the most rambling, vapid, and unmusical composition in the entire opera. It is passion torn to tatters, without a vestige of expression or a gleam of sentiment. The preceding scene, in which Glycere compels Sappho to her will, both in regard to dramatic and musical effect, is a tissue of exaggerations from first to last, while the position of Phaon, in the trio just mentioned, is too absurd to excite either interest or commiseration. The third act has the merit of being short, but except the shepherd's song, with its ground-bass and imitation of the bagpipes (sung with fine taste by Signor Stigelli, and encored), there is nothing connected or striking in the music. The opening air, in which Phaon calls upon Sappho in his despair, despite the splendid dramatic singing of Signor Tamberlik could not emerge from its dullness. A C in alt, however, at the end of the *agitato*, which the great tenor gave from the chest with prodigious force, brought down a burst of applause, and sustained the wavering endurance of the audience. The concluding song of Sappho, addressed to her lyre, previously to throwing herself into the

sea, which should have been the most impressive piece of music in the opera, is nothing more than an ordinary French romance, with an *arpeggio* accompaniment. It gives us pain to be obliged to criticise thus severely the first opera of a new composer; but were we to go out of our way to pay unmerited compliments, we should be deceiving the public, without benefiting either the theatre or the composer. Let M. Gounod console himself with the fact that *Sapho* is his maiden essay, and the hope that experience may bring facility, taste be refined by knowledge, and invention ripen with maturity. Should his next opera be token improvement, and deserve praise, none will feel happier, or be more anxious to acknowledge and applaud, than ourselves.

Of the execution we have but few words to say. We never saw Madame Viardot in a more lengthy and fatiguing part than *Saffo*, one more cruelly arduous and exacting, and at the same time more unfitted for her peculiar talent. The conscientious artist was always present, spurred on by zeal and resolution; but the *physique* was wanting to realise the indications of the mind, while the continual strain for effect only lessened the chance of attaining it as the opera proceeded. M. Gounod has by no means been skilful in measuring the capabilities of Madame Viardot's voice, which is wholly incompetent to such unceasing exertion. Where the music admitted of expression and true pathos, Madame Viardot sang beautifully; but such moments were rare. Only the most consummate ability could have helped her through the rest. The acting of Madame Viardot exhibited throughout that intelligent and elaborate filling up for which it is always remarkable; but her movements and *poses* were more than usually studied and artificial. Tamberlik's performance cannot be praised too highly; out of very meagre elements he made a good part, and sang the music, difficult and unthankful as it is, magnificently. Tamburini made the somewhat unmeaning character of Pythias amusing by his quiet humour, and gave the drinking song with immense spirit. Maralti's first appearance this season might have been in a more grateful part than that of *Alceus*; but whatever could be made of it he effected in an artistic and satisfactory manner. Stigelli only appears in the last scene, to sing the shepherd's song, to his excellent reading of which we have alluded. Madame Castellan was terribly taxed in the music of *Glycere*, which in most instances is neither vocal nor melodious; but she exerted herself with the best goodwill, and obtained a great deal of applause in her air. The trio of the second act, at times, was dangerous to the intonation of the charming singer, and no wonder. M. Rommi merits a word for his careful singing in the High Priest; and Signors Soldi and Polonino gave strength to the *ensemble* by undertaking the insignificant parts of the heralds.

Mr. Costa had never a more trying duty to accomplish, and never deserved more hearty praise. The almost faultless manner in which the instrumental accompaniments, always difficult, rambling, and incoherent, were rendered by the superb orchestra under his direction, and the power and decision of the choruses, in spite of the awkward manner in which the vocal parts are disposed, showed that the opera had been rehearsed with the utmost anxiety and vigilance, and that every means had been exerted to do justice to M. Gounod and sustain the reputation of the theatre. In the scenic and costume departments the same care was manifested. Nothing could be more appropriate and complete. If, therefore, the feeling of the public, suggested at the end of each act by the silence of the large majority, and established by the coldest indifference at the conclusion, impels us to pronounce M. Gounod's *Saffo* a failure, it is only justice to add that the result must be laid unconditionally at the door of the author

and composer, in whose behalf the whole means of the establishment were devoted, with an energy and unremitting attention worthy of a better cause.

Original Correspondence.

NATIONAL ENGLISH OPERA.

(To the *Editor of the Musical World*.)

SIR,—Having in the foregoing series of letters, given a few of the most prominent reasons why the institution of a national opera should be attempted, and having also given a very brief outline of the principles upon which such an undertaking should be based, it should not be hence inferred that such are the *only* reasons, far from it, there are very many others; and as for reforms, they too are so numerous that to mention them only would be to cover a vast space, for which reasons *alone* have I circumscribed them; my readers will therefore be pleased to consider that neither my condemnation of the old system—nor the reforms contemplated in my new system are bounded by the observations contained in these letters. A few remarks will therefore not be misplaced.

In regard to a choice of operas—heretofore managers of theatres have shown either great favouritism, or singular want of judgment in admitting to their boards only the works of certain known authors, regardless of the fact that *MELODY* should be the *STAPLE* of their choice. They have almost invariably fallen back upon *old* authors rather than encourage *new* ones, either from fear, or over confidence, quite unobservant of one singular, but fully appreciable circumstance, namely, that a *musician's* first work is usually fuller of melody than his second; and that no musician, however great, can summon the faculty of writing well at volition. To bring a case in point—five operas have appeared, *seriatim*, at Her Majesty's Theatre, each of these five being written by a most eminent musician, each, too, in its turn has been trumpeted forth as a wonderful production, yet which of these five operas will live through another five nights? I may even go further and say—which of these five operas contains a single one aria (*if*? we except one bravura in Auber's opera) such as will hereafter be listened to with pleasure in a concert room? Yet these said five operas have either been written “to command” or chosen deliberately, because their authors were *known*, and entirely *because* it was deemed unwise to try new men. Can any sensible person believe that Italy—the land of song, contains no musician capable of better things than Verdi?—but a true to all suppositions of this kind—it is *WELL KNOWN* that admirably as both our Italian Operas are managed in regard to their musical interpretation, they are as ill managed as possible in regard to a choice of works. Let but *ANY* management invite a competition of talent—and choose *fairly* between the competitors, and neither Italians nor English will fail to discover a mine of wealth such as hitherto has scarce been dreamed of in their philosophy.

The constitution of an orchestra is another matter of extreme importance to which I believe it necessary to advert. Up to the present moment, our operatic orchestras have been characterised by their noisy effects. This may be said to be the fault of the composer for the time being, but it is nevertheless a fault, and cannot be too sufficiently reprobated. I have not only considered over the cause myself, but have carefully collected the opinions of others, and this is the result—namely, that there is a too frequent use of the trombones, as also of the *cornet à pistons*, and usually a conspicuous want of tenors; to remedy which I would counsel the more frequent use of the violoncello as a tenor instrument, leaving the contra-bassi to take their own distinct parts instead of being merely the echo of the violoncello. In conclusion of this subject, I subjoin a list of the orchestral force which, in my humble opinion, should form a well apportioned band for a national opera, on a *moderate* scale—

Violini Primo 7; V. Secondo 5; Tenori 6; Violoncelli 5; Contrabassi 3; Flauti 2; Clarionetti 2; Oboe 2; Cornet 1; Tromba 1; Corni 3; Corno Bassetto 1; Tromboni 3; Fajotti 2; Tymponi according to circumstances; in all 45 or 46.

For such an orchestra a chorus of 70 individuals would be amply sufficient, yet not too much, and *à propos* of chorus writing. It is

extremely desirable that the accompaniment should be kept *under* the vocal score—and not, excepting in rare instances, go above it, either in force or compass.

With regard to the extent to which an operatic company might be formed—that would, of course, depend upon the theatre to be filled, yet I am of opinion that a very much less extensive number than is usually thought requisite might be found to suffice, if the system which I have ventured to propose were adopted, even to the extent of a large pecuniary saving.

I will now conclude this series of letters by inviting all those members of the profession who may agree with me that *a reform is necessary*, to co-operate in their endeavours to bring about the institution of a National Opera by the following *homely* but *only* practicable means—namely, to send their names and addresses (under cover) to the Publisher of this Work, for the purpose of selecting such amongst them as may feel disposed to act in concert as a *COMMITTEE OF ACTION*. And in order that no squeamishness or fear of ridicule, or dread of offence (towards certain quarters) may operate to disadvantage, let it be distinctly understood that every name sent in shall be kept sacred from all eyes except those of them who originate the present movement. I would suggest that all who may send will range themselves under the heads of "vocal principals," "composers," "instrumentalists," or "chorus," each individual specifying his or her essential qualifications. Should this be done, it will be for the Committee which shall be appointed to decide upon the peculiar means hereafter to be adopted. The first and all important step being to find a *CO-OPERATIVE* body of respectable artistes, willing to advance their own common interests by a combination of talent and energy. With this I conclude, observing that the proprietors of this journal have kindly and liberally offered every assistance in their power towards forwarding the object in view—as earnest of which see advertisement in the last page.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
PHILO-MUSICA.

NATIONAL OPERA.
(To the Editor of the *Musical World*.)

SIR.—Having been the first—at least the first this year—to draw attention to the state of English Opera in several articles which you deemed worthy of insertion, you may perhaps consider me entitled to comment on the suggestions of your correspondents on this subject, although from continued ill-health I have withdrawn from all idea of interfering, save to point out from time to time such errors as in my humble judgment are to be avoided, and such courses as it may seem expedient to pursue.

Upwards of two months ago, in consequence of the remarks and letters respecting English Opera, which appeared in your columns, an irregular kind of meeting was held somewhere, at which after a variety of suggestions, and amongst others, as I was informed, one by which a certain music publisher would have secured nearly all the benefit to himself or to his class. The meeting arrived at the conclusion that nothing could then be done as there was no house to be obtained.

I deem this a most fortunate event, since such a conclusion shows how little was such a meeting able to cope with the difficulties of the question; having broken down before the smallest of them.

I am glad to see your correspondent Philo-Musica again in the field, especially as we hear no more about petitioning parliament for assistance, but my comments on his suggestions must be taken in good part, although they may at times run counter to them. He will give me credit for wishing him, and every one, all success provided it be legitimately obtained, with a view to the main point, and not to gratify merely the vanity or ambition of a few. With regard to his present scheme, many parts of it seem carefully considered and good; but until the financial portion of it is before us, one cannot be quite sure of understanding it perfectly. For example, I gather from Philo-Musica's letter that he proposes to establish an English Opera under the management of seven principal officers and a director; in other words somewhat on a similar plan to one I have before advocated, viz., a modified republic.

But if I am right in thus reading Philo-Musica's letter, I would ask of what use is the rule No. 3, providing for "a graduated scale of salaries, less than their registered amount?" since if it is a republic in any form, with the exception of the lowest classes, there can be no specified salary, as the *whole* proceeds (a fluctuating amount) must be divided: but if the salaries were fixed and, after paying them, by some strange chance a balance remained in the treasury, how should it be appropriated? The rights of each individual would be infringed if the money which each assisted to gain should be carried over to "next season," when perhaps the same individuals might not be engaged. It is not likely that at first there would be any great surplus, but whilst framing a scheme, it is as well to do it with proper care and consideration. However, until Philo-Musica expounds the pithy part of the question, and explains whence he will draw the sinews of war, I shall look with silent interest, and possibly some amusement, on the "chateaux in Espagne," which I doubt not many scheming heads are now building, though it may not be out of place to remind them that their castles are to be built neither in the air nor in Spain, and therefore that it will be well to season their poetical visions with a little practical common sense, and I congratulate Philo-Musica, for one, on having progressed so far without having run against any insurmountable obstacle or broached too wild a theory—*Au reste nous verrons*.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.,
F. G. B.

LONDON SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

(To the Editor of *The Musical World*.)

14th August, 1851.

SIR.—I am afraid that the explanation of G. will not do much to reassure the subscribers to this Society.

I should have been glad to have found its prospects improving, but, in the face of the figures given by G., I cannot indulge in such belief. These show such a continuous drain upon the Society that it is not likely parties will be found willing to continue the perilous honour of taking a prominent part in the responsibility of the direction, or run the risk of involving themselves in its liabilities by becoming members of it.

A more serious view of the affair, to men of business habits, arises from a comparison of the accounts as now put forth, with those given at the previous meetings.

In the report for the first year, the subscribers were informed that the outstanding accounts then due amounted to £406 3s. 4d. less, £11 14s. 2d. in the Secretary's hands. The loss is now stated to have been £876 7s. 10d.

At the end of the printed balance sheet appended to the second year's report is the following—"The outstanding liabilities of the Society are about £500."

They are now run up to £1127 18s. 4d. At the third annual meeting, held in April last, the subscribers were informed that the liabilities had been reduced to about £350. The loss is now admitted to have been £1237; although in this amount it is understood that an additional sum of nearly £500, charged by Mr. Surman for the loan of music, has been struck out of the accounts by the Committee.

The explanation of G. would have been more to the purpose had he informed your readers of the amount of the increased (?) subscription list.

With accounts "cooked" in this fashion, it cannot be wondered that your correspondent thinks a report of the proceedings of the adjourned general meeting calculated to produce an unfavourable impression. It is, however, only due to the subscribers that they should know the real state of affairs, and I for one have to thank you for the information afforded me by your report of the meeting which, for obvious reasons, I did not feel inclined to attend.

A SUBSCRIBER.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.—Handel's *Messiah* is to be performed on Friday 29th. inst. There will be no performance next Friday.

How I tell Dramatic Intelligence.

FRENCH PLAYS.—ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.—Since our last, Monsieur Bouffé has rallied from his indisposition and has appeared in his great part of "La fille de l'Avaré." Of the piece itself we cannot speak in terms of praise; inasmuch as the author having followed in the track of Molière, although taking for the ground-work of his drama the novel of *Eugenie Grandet* by the late Monsieur de Balzac, has between these two masterpieces fallen to the ground. "Qui embrasse trop, mal embrasse," is a proverb in every way applicable to the author of this piece; why not be content with the simple story presented by Balzac? There is a pathos in this interesting tale, which combines all the essentials of dramatic effect; why attempt to give us a dilution of the great scene of Molière's *Avaré*? Of the wind-up we do not complain so much, we are accustomed to this sacrifice to popular feeling, and do not begrudge the lovers their happiness, neither have we any desire to send the fairer portion of the audience home with tears in their eyes. On the whole we consider the piece as feeble and uninteresting, but as a vehicle for the acting of Monsieur Bouffé we are led to consider it with a certain amount of favour. The words put into the mouth of old Grandet are not in themselves of much significance, but the actor's delivery heightens their meaning and gives them importance. His bye play conduces to fill up the part, and we thus have before us a picture which is of itself a complete study, perfect in all its details and devoid of anything like exaggeration. In the first act we are presented with the miser pursuing the usual tenor of his every day avocations, we get an insight into his character, we see him laboriously building up the edifice of his fortune. The avidity with which he seizes on the gold which returns to his coffers; the regret, the anguish, with which he parts with his purchase-money were admirably pourtrayed by M. Bouffé. The scene with his lawyer was a master-piece of acting. In the following act we have the struggle between his love for his money, and his love for his daughter, in which the former is victorious, although the author has feared to work out the position to its extreme consequences, ending by a sort of compromise, which robs us of the small respect we may still have left for the old man, who turns out to be little better than a rogue who dishonestly withholds his daughter's portion. During this act M. Bouffé proved himself a complete comedian, the sudden change from self-gratification to anguish and despair when he has discovered the robbery was admirably conveyed. The wild haggard look, the glossy eye, the dishevelled hair, the complete prostration of the faculties, proved the terrible violence of this passion, by which all his other instincts are as it were absorbed. A more complete picture of despair cannot well be conceived. The part of Eugenie was well sustained by Mademoiselle St. Marc, who, to a certain extent, shared the honours and applause with the great comedian. This lady has latterly made much progress and promises to hold a distinguished rank in the profession. The other parts were also respectably filled, more particularly that of the lover by M. Lagrange, who managed to play with a sufficiency of warmth without at all verging on exaggeration.

J. de C.

HAYMARKET.—A translation of the libretto of Adolph Adam's well-known *La Reine d'un Jour* (which it will be remembered has been performed at more than one of the London theatres), has been taken by Mr. Edward Fitzwilliam as the framework of a ballad opera, brought out

on Wednesday night at the Haymarket, with great success. This young composer, the son of the celebrated actress, has already distinguished himself as a writer of a variety of songs, apropos to certain dramatic pieces produced at the Lyceum and elsewhere; and once upon a time the public were invited to the hearing of a *Stabat Mater* bearing his name, besides other ecclesiastical attempts, which betokened the promise of considerable ability. His present effort does not take a very high ground; scarcely any of the pieces contained in the *Queen of a Day* rising above the ordinary ballad level; though as ballads—as pieces of vocal music for chamber use—they are of a very superior order, and surely calculated to become popular. The two acts comprise an extensive variety of these simplicities, pretending to no specific dramatic character, but exceedingly pleasant to listen to. Mr. Fitzwilliam possesses an agreeable vein of melody, and in the present case he has demonstrated it very advantageously, while the instrumentation of the several morceaux betrays a more than ordinary knowledge of orchestral resources, as well as a laudable ambition to desert hackneyed roads for others less familiar and less trodden. The house was disposed to give a friendly acceptance to all they heard, and encores were enforced with a vehemence which admitted of no denial.

The opera was very neatly played and sung by the artists who were concerned in it. We never heard Miss Louisa Pyne, who personated the extempore Queen, sing more prettily than she did on Wednesday night, and the composer no doubt was indebted to her for no small portion of the success which his effusions met with. Mr. W. Harrison was also a coadjutor of value, as the encores he received plainly testified. Mr. Weiss represented the innkeeper, who, like the prudent vicar, votes on either side according to the policy of the moment, with the dryness peculiar to himself, while Mr. Stuart, Mrs. Stanley, and Mrs. Caulfield filled the remaining parts with all the histrionic vivacity that was required.

ADELPHI.—Mr. Hudson has been making his half-dozen last bows here, to an English audience, before his trip across the Atlantic. Lover's comic drama, *Rory O'More* was well chosen, for it has evidently been written for the original representative (whoever he was) of the hero, with the exception of whom, it contains but little pretension, either to character or plot. Mr. Hudson's portrait of the shrewd, light-hearted, generous Irish Peasant, was given with even more than his accustomed vivacity and exuberant animal spirits. Miss Woolgar as Kathleen, made the very best of a part which is quite unworthy of her. The house has been choke-full all the week.

THE DISTIN FAMILY.—These clever artistes performed on their Sax-horns, and sang various madrigals, glees, &c., on Tuesday week and four following evenings at Jersey, and on Monday and Tuesday last, gave concerts under the patronage of the Governor at Guernsey. Thence they returned to England, to make a professional tour in the provinces, after which, they will return to London about the first week in October. They have been well received everywhere.

THE "CONCOURS" OF THE CONSERVATOIRE OF PARIS has just taken place. The two first prizes for singing and acting were unanimously accorded to Mdlle. Palmyre Wertheim, pupil of Bordogni. Her voice, method of singing, and dramatic talent, took every one by surprise. Much is to be expected from Mdlle. Palmyre Wertheim when she makes her *début* on the stage, which is shortly expected.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

Madame Barbieri Nini, appeared for the second time on Saturday night, in *Lucrezia Borgia*, and excited the same *furore* as on Tuesday. We confess we still find some difficulty in arriving at the true merits of this celebrated artist. We set off with saying that Madame Barbieri Nini is a very extraordinary singer, and in some respects one of the most finished we ever heard. The studied and practised vocalist is always evident, and the artist always feigningly live to her business, whether of singer or actress. We think her style and method—although occasionally open to the charge of extravagance—are built upon the best Italian models, and there is no doubt that she belongs to that legitimate school which numbered in its ranks Colbrun, Catalani, Pasta, Pisaroni and others. If Madame Barbieri Nini has to a certain extent lost the freshness and delicious quality of her voice, she yet retains sufficient to satisfy all but the most fastidious ear. Her *piano* singing is still exquisite and entirely satisfying, and it is only when she forces her voice that we perceive the lack of power, and the falling off in its freshness. We are told that Madame Barbieri Nini has been long celebrated in Verdi's operas, some of which have been purposely written for her. We know not that, but, if it be true, Madame Barbieri Nini must have lost much of her former power, for it seems to us that Verdi's music requires much more force than she now possesses. Perhaps continually singing in the works of young Italy's composer has deprived her voice of its strength. This is not at all improbable; it would be less likely, that, singing Verdi's music for years, she could have retained its quality and strength. It is to be lamented that Madame Barbieri Nini had not come to this country while yet in the zenith of her power and reputation. Her name still stands highest among the high in Italy, but something of this, no doubt, must be attributed to past memories. Why Madame Barbieri Nini did not appear in England before the present year is to us a mystery unfathomable. Surely great singers are not so plentiful that such an artist should have been overlooked and lost in their brilliancy. Even when fiery speculation started a rival opera house, and all Europe, as it was supposed, was searched for stars of the first magnitude, why was Barbieri Nini allowed to raise her tempests only in Milan, Naples, Florence and Rome? Did the noise of her triumphs never reach the ears of Mr. Lumley, or Mr. Gye? Were the Italian and French journals perused with contempt, and the artist treated as a myth? But such was also the case with Tamberlik, one of the greatest tenors of the present age, who, but for Ronconi's single recommendation, might have yet been singing Verdi's music to the crowded benches of the Barcelona opera house. These things, we repeat, are unaccountable. At this moment in some retired theatre of Italy there may haply exist some embryo Jenny Lind, or full-blown Malibran, which it will be left to the enterprise of a Bunn to discover and bring to England.

While Madame Barbieri Nini appears to have lost some of the freshness and quality of her voice, its compass and evenness of tone are still retained to a remarkable degree. The upper tones apparently have not deteriorated. These are singularly telling, and are always attacked with precision. The manner in which Madame Barbieri Nini takes a C or a C sharp in alt, betokens an amount of skill which singers might study with advantage. There is no mistake about her taking a high note. She does not jerk it out, or jump at it, or get rid of it as soon as touched, but attacks it with ease and sus-

tains it without shrinking. Her cadences, if sometimes overlaboured, are dazzling for their novelty and boldness, and executed in a manner which may safely be pronounced faultless. Indeed Madame Barbieri Nini attempts nothing in the executive way which she does not accomplish, and we remember few singers who better satisfy us with respect to her ornaments. Madame Barbieri Nini's mode of pronouncing is remarkable. Not only is every word heard with distinctness, but every syllable, nay, almost every letter. There is a tendency to exaggeration in this; but the fault is perhaps on the right side, and for our own part we are glad to hear and understand what the singer says, and consider it an essential point of vocalization to utter the words intelligibly. Madame Barbieri Nini possesses this art of articulating her words with curious distinctness in common with Pasta, Catalani, Malibran and Viardot Garcia. Distinct enunciation is one of the first principles of singing, as every one knows, and yet how many singers are there, whose words are but a mere jumble, and whose mouths do not appear to be always in the same position, no matter what sounds they have to emit, what syllables to utter?

Neither the face nor the figure of Madame Barbieri Nini is well adapted to the stage. The former is plain and inexpressive, the latter dumpy, and by no means remarkable for grace. Under the influence of strong feeling, however, Madame Barbieri Nini's features are kindled into unmissable intelligence and animation, and there is that in her attitudes and gestures, which, despite the drawback of an ungraceful person, betokens a kindred mind for the grand and the dignified.

We shall await with much curiosity the appearance of Madame Barbieri Nini in her next part, which, we understand, will be Anna Bolena. In the mean time we may add, that while opinions are conflicting with regard to her merits on certain points, all agree that she, Nini, is an extraordinary singer.

The production of Balfe's comic opera, *Les Quatre fils Aymon*, on Monday night, under the Italian title of *I Quattro Fratelli*, for the benefit of the composer, was an event of more than ordinary interest. The plot and the music of this sparkling work are well known. M. M. Leuven and Brunswick never invented a more ingenious and amusing *libretto*. Balfe never wrote music more lively, untiring, and vivacious. It is not necessary to enter into details, since none of our readers can have forgotten the adventures of the four sons, who, left penniless by their father, Duke Aymon, through the wit and spirit of the enchanting Erminia, daughter of Baron Beaumanoir, the stingy, get wives and fortunes; the lucky Ollivier obtaining the hand and heart of Erminia, while the three brothers are united to her three cousins, each fairer than her neighbour.

Falstaff was written expressly by Balfe for the Italian stage; *Les Quatre Fils Aymon* was composed for the Opera Comique in Paris. Nevertheless, we even prefer *I Quattro Fratelli*, as an Italian *opera buffa*, to *Falstaff*. We may be wrong, but we are right. The cast at Her Majesty's Theatre gave Balfe a chance that he never had before in France, in Germany, or in Belgium. Such an Erminia as Cruvelli was enough to make the success of an opera of less merit than that of Balfe. A more elegant, yet brilliant and dashing piece of comedy was never seen. Every one of the three costumes suited Cruvelli to admiration; indeed, in this particular, it would be difficult not to suit her, since she suits every dress so well that the dress must needs look handsome

that she wears. In every scene Cruvelli was the life and soul of the action. She was quicksilver; and yet, in the midst of her incessant movement, every thing she did was graceful, natural, and easy. She had already proved herself a tragedian in *Fidelio* and *Norma*; in *Erminia* she came out as a sterling comedian.

The music of *Erminia* is well fitted to Cruvelli; and to make the part of more importance Balfe has written two new *airs de bravoure*. The first is a complete *feu d'artifice* of difficulties, requiring a facility of execution, a power and a range of voice which few singers possess, but which Cruvelli, thanks to nature, has entirely at command. The burden of the song goes to say that *Erminia* does not care to be a duchess; and Cruvelli sings it as if she did care to be a duchess, or indeed anything but a singer. The second air, a *rondo finale* in the modern style, is even more brilliant and showy than the first. At the same time it is more concise, and consequently more effective. Cruvelli sang it superbly. The trills, and scales, and arpeggios, and roulades, and *points d'orgue*, were executed with marvellous skill. In short, we have never listened to a more finished and admirable exhibition of vocal talent. It created a *furore*; and no wonder. The following extract from the notice of the *Times*, however, enters more fully into the merits of Cruvelli's *Erminia* than we are able to do at the present moment; we therefore quote it as an apology for our own want of words:

"The dashing *Erminia* was impersonated by Mdlle. Sofie Cruvelli, to whose share the chief labour fell. Besides the original music belonging to the character of *Erminia*, Mdlle. Cruvelli was entrusted with two bravura airs composed by Mr. Balfe for the occasion. The first of these, "Di Duchessa il nome altero," is very long, full of *traits de force*, intricate *floriture*, *points d'orgue* of the most elaborate nature, scales chromatic and diatonic, arpeggios, &c., involving endless modulations, and taxing the register of the voice throughout a compass of nearly three octaves—from D in alt. to F sharp below the lines. Nevertheless, although executed with marvellous adroitness by Mdlle. Cruvelli, it failed to produce a proportionate effect—proving that extraneous intervals, velocitous roulades, and trills and flights, that are nothing more than trills and flights, have no absolute charm, unless accompanied by sentiment, and made subservient to form, in the absence of which the office of music as a medium of expression is set at nought, and the astonishment of the few who comprehend the difficulties surmounted, becomes a very poor compensation for the indifference of the crowd, untouched and apathetic without being able to explain the reason. The second air, the *rondo finale* of the third act ("Or qui verra"), was quite another thing. Here the difficulties were even greater and more various; but the theme was joyous and appropriate to the matter in hand, the design simple, and the whole musically interesting. A more brilliant and dexterous piece of vocalization has seldom been heard; and, as there was nothing forced or unnatural in the music, the rich voice of the young singer, full, clear, and telling from the highest note to the lowest, gave an additional charm to the extreme facility of her execution, and stirred up the audience to a genial display of enthusiasm. In her general performance, Mdlle. Cruvelli evinced quite enough of the intelligence and accomplishments of a true comedian to show that, when thoroughly perfected in the character, which at present can hardly be expected of her, *Erminia* will be one of her best assumptions. Her singing in the lovely ballad, "Giovin bella," one of Mr. Balfe's happiest thoughts, was full of expression; and in the duet in F with Olivier—the *cabaletta* of which "Quando tornar ridente," is, perhaps, the most beautiful melody in the opera—her voice blended charmingly with that of her partner, Signor Gardoni, and the impression produced was undeniable. Mdlle. Cruvelli's most genuine and deserved success, however, both as an actress and a singer, was achieved in the scene where *Erminia* advises her three cousins on the best mode of

pleasing the tastes of their husbands (act 3). Nothing could be bolder, or more animated than her delivery of the martial phrase, "Sposo hai tu d'amor guerriero," addressed to *Clara*, and nothing more neat and graceful than her execution of the sparkling *staccato* passage, "In sai ben condir," to *Isolande*, which completely captivated the audience, and was encored with unanimity. By her performance of *Erminia*, Mdlle. Cruvelli has decidedly risen another step in the favour of the public.

After which it is unnecessary to say more than that next to *Fidelio* and *Norma*, *Erminia* has been the greatest and most legitimate triumph of Sophie Cruvelli.

M. Massol, in the part of the Baron de Beaumanoir, proved himself a capital comic actor. Every one knew he was a fine singer, but few anticipated from the popular barytone such a genuine display of spirit and fun. His grand *aria buffa*, where the baron gives his orders about the feast, was admirably sung, and the comic duet with Coletti, one of the most genial things in the opera, went off to admiration. It is a pity that the approaching autumn season in Paris, which demands great preparations in advance, should necessitate the speedy departure of M. Massol. His departure will be deeply felt, and Mr. Lumley would do well, if, under any circumstances, he could retain his services, until the end of the season.

The other characters were well filled. Gardoni was delightful as Olivier, and never sang with more taste and feeling. He gave the charming ballad "Gia tarda e nera," a gem in its way, to admiration. Mdlle. Giuliani was excellent as *Clara*. A new *cavatina*, "Tutto ben riusci," composed for her by Balfe, and sung in the most artistic and satisfactory manner, was one of the hits of the evening. The parts of the other two cousins, *Isolande* and *Eglantina*, were less efficiently played by Mdlles. Feller and Lanza. Riccardo, Allardo, and Rinaldo, three of the four brothers Aymon, received full justice at the hands of Signors Pardini, Mercuriali, and Balanchi, and Signor Coletti was perfect as the major-domo, Ivon.

The opera went off with immense *éclat*. Balfe was complimented after each act with a call and a volley of applause. All the principal singers were recalled at the end of each act; at the conclusion Cruvelli came forward alone, at the unanimous summons of the house; and to sum up, Balfe was led on by Gardoni and cheered "to the echo." We have rarely witnessed a more genuine success.

On Tuesday *Lucrezia Borgia*, with Madame Barbieri Nini for the third time as *Lucrezia*. A selection from the *Diable à Quatre* followed.

The performances on Wednesday consisted of the last scene of the *Due Foscari*, for Coletti; the *Figlia del Regimento*, and the *divertissement* from the second act of *Il Prodigio*. Alboni's *Maria* produced a far greater effect than it did on the first night, and the audience were roused to a real state of enthusiasm by the *rondo finale*, from Balfe's *Maid of Artois*, which Alboni warbled with wonderful brilliancy and incomparable ease.

Don Giovanni was repeated on Thursday with the same cast as on the previous Friday, Alboni's *Zerlina* being its most remarkable feature. Certainly, for pure, legitimate, and unadulterated singing, nothing we have ever heard surpasses that of Alboni in *Zerlina*. Mozart's music is preserved inviolate, and every effect is produced without the slightest effort, or attempt at display. As a piece of vocalization Alboni's *Zerlina* is a grand model. The opera was followed by the ballet, *Les Trois Graces*.

Balfe's opera *I Quattro Fratelli* was repeated last night, and went infinitely better than on Monday. This was to be expected, as the performers were not quite up to the mark the first night. Cruvelli was immensely applauded, especially in the rondo finale, which created a *furore*, and sang with even more fire and finish than at the first performance. So great an effect has the charming *cantatrice* produced in her comic acting and singing, that a general wish has been expressed to hear her in one of Rossini's operas *buffa*. Why not the *Conte Ory*, say we, especially, if we mistake not, as it was promised in the prospectus this season?

The *divertissement* from *Il Prodigio* followed.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

On Saturday, M. Gounod's new and anxiously awaited opera, *Saffo*, was produced for the first time in this country. Of M. Gounod's *Saffo* we have had our say elsewhere, to which we refer the reader curious of the new composer's genius and acquirements.

On Monday—an extra night, but given as a subscription night—the *Huguenots* was played. The performance calls for no remarks.

Saffo again on Tuesday, and the sensation created by M. Gounod's *chef d'œuvre* may be gathered from the fact that the theatre was almost empty on that night, so thin an audience never having been seen at the Royal Italian Opera.

On Thursday, *Norma*, with the cloister scene from *La Favòrita*.

CRUVELLI'S ERMINIA.

(From the *Morning Chronicle*.)

Cruvelli acquitted herself brilliantly. The opera affords little scope for her especial powers, but her personation of Erminia was most lively and intelligent, and she sang with the utmost spirit and fire. Her finale was one of the most magnificent displays of elaborate vocalization we have ever heard, and would in itself have been sufficient to establish a singer's reputation. The artists were called after each act, and at the close, and then a special call was raised for Cruvelli, a well-merited tribute to her exquisite effort at the end of the work.

(From the *Morning Herald*.)

The opera was most efficiently cast. Cruvelli entered with great enthusiasm into the part of the heroine. The gay, fluent music of the *Quatre Fils Aymon*, as prettily flippant and flexible as any that was ever met with on the French lyrical stage, could scarcely have a better exponent than in this lady, who sang and acted with zeal, liveliness, and point.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

(From the *Morning Post*.)

Independently of its old established influence, peculiarly auspicious circumstances having secured the prospects of the present season, we hear that the management has for some time past been content to carry on, quietly and silently, the preparation of the new campaign. We had indeed ourselves observed, *en passant*, some days since, that the box-office was open, and busy in receiving the votes of subscribers, whilst the stage-door was besieged by the newly arrived followers of Euterpe and Terpsichore, hastening to the first review. The season will begin about the 15th of next month.

As far as we can glean, the following are the resources of the present season; and it will be seen that, whether we look to the established talent familiar to us, which time has not impaired, or to the new *virtuosi* who come to us for the first time, with ample certificates of fame, the array is both brilliant and formidable.

The first artist to be mentioned is Jenny Lind, who will arrive in March. Her presence alone ensures success. Her triumphs last year, when unknown to us, surpassed all precedent; every one would see her, and but a tithe of those who wished succeeded. Since that time her visits in the country and her triumphs abroad, which have kept public attention constantly alive, have increased the avidity to behold her in England, whilst one hears on all sides of foreigners of mark who intend to come from abroad during the season to gratify their longing to behold her. For the subscribers of last season we hear that she has great novelty in store; not only is it intended that she should perform in new operas, but her interpretation of favourite parts, like those of Desdemona, Donna Anna, Lucia, &c., will far surpass the attraction of any other form of novelty. There are classical operas, like the *Zauberflöte* of Mozart, &c.—the most perfect works of the great masters—which have been totally lost to the musical public for many years for want of congenial talent; it is intended to revive some of these dormant classical works this year. Another *prima donna*, of European fame, will visit her Majesty's Theatre early this season,—we allude to Erminia Tadolini, whose appearance has been so often apparently compassed, even vainly announced as positive, in past years. This great artist's fame is too familiar to the musical world to need much comment. At the great imperial theatre, La Scala, she has been engaged almost every year at the brilliant epoch, the Carnival. At San Carlos, no *prima donna* has been able to secure a triumphant footing since she left it, so great a favourite was Tadolini with the Neapolitans. In Germany her success has been no less marked and constant. Fortunately, for the variety it will afford, her style and line of parts are totally contrasted with those of Mdlle. Lind; and she is about to renew in London the career she followed in Vienna, where she sang, for one season, at the same time as the great Swedish vocalist, maintaining the most amicable rivalry. We have to announce another vocalist, one of the youngest amongst the successful *prime donne* at present on the stage, Signora Cruvelli, who, some short time since, made so triumphant an *entrée* upon the great operatic theatre, La Fenice. Her person, we hear, is handsome and commanding; there is the fire of genius in her voice and in her dramatic action; her intonation is truthful, and her organ is clear, powerful, and sonorous—the latter being qualities essential for great success in a theatre of so large an area as that in which she made her *début*, and qualifications which are deficient in the majority of *prime donne* (when they do not strain their vocal power), either from original want of power or from the effect of fatigue and age. Our readers will be happy to hear of the return of Adelaida Moltini to Her Majesty's Theatre. If we mistake not, she is one amongst the artists already arrived. She was always a great favourite with the English public, and her absence has been often alluded to with regret. Louisa Abbadia, a distinguished vocalist, of great histrionic power, who has performed with success the parts *di primo cartello*, at all the great theatres of Italy, is another important acquisition announced. She is said to possess all the peculiar gifts necessary to the faithful and effective interpretation of the more modern school of Italian music. There will be a young *debutante* this season, in the person of Signorina Sofia Vera. If we are not mistaken, she is the daughter of a lady of eminence as a vocal artist, who has married advantageously, and retired from the stage, and was desirous her daughter should not enter into its trying career; but, on the part of Signorina Sofia Vera, the love of art has been too strong to resist, and sanguine hopes are entertained of her success.

Amongst the *contralti* mentioned is Mdlle. Schwartz, who is immediately expected. Those who have visited the Austrian capital cannot have forgotten the talent and prepossessing appearance of this accomplished young vocalist. For want of time and space we must pass over the *second donne* expected. The *tenori* will be, first, that great favourite of the public, Italo Gardoni, who, in spite of all the interested prophecies to the

contrary, will arrive in London on Monday next. The efforts made to tempt this young tenor from his present engagement sufficiently attest the increasing value of his talent. There will be two other new tenors. Report speaks very highly of the first engaged, Signor Cuzzani—"the tones of his voice are genial, with an impassioned, penetrating *timbre*, and vibrating accent; and, possessing great and intuitive knowledge of the stage, he has never failed of success." Another young tenor, the news of whose engagement only reached London yesterday, is supported by the warmest eulogies of the highest judges in the musical world, particularly the Countess de Rossi (Sontag), the Earl of Westmoreland, and Meyerbeer. His name is Labacetto. He has been engaged during three consecutive seasons at the same theatre where Gardoni established his first reputation—the Italian Opera at Berlin. He is young, his voice is sweet, of very extended register, and he sings in the style of Rubini. Whilst speaking of this class of vocalists, we may here state that we entertain no small degree of hope from private and authentic sources of our own, that her Majesty's Theatre will be visited this season by another tenor, to whom no other at present on the stage can be compared.

As to the bass voices announced, all the other operatic stages in Europe could not furnish such a galaxy—were it only that there is not, and never will be, another Lablache, and he is once more coming to head them. With him will arrive Coletti, second to Lablache alone; likewise that sound sterling basso, Bouché, and that excellent musician, F. Lablache. To this has been added this season another baritone, Signor Belletti. This vocalist for several years was in the same *troupe*, and sang constantly with Jenny Lind in her most favourite operas. He is represented to be full of nervous energy, an excellent actor as well as singer. We must pass over in our haste the other singers, such as Signors Guidi, Solaris, &c., who will render the operas effective by giving full value to the secondary parts.

The ballet department will, as in general, embrace successively, and sometimes at the same moment, almost all that is worth acquisition of first-rate choreographic talent in Europe. There will be two *maîtres de ballet*—Perrot and Paul Taglioni; each will compose a new grand ballet, besides bringing out the compositions of others, with divertissements, &c. The former is already actively engaged in marshalling his *troupe*. Besides the compositions of the *maîtres de ballet*, and amongst the works written for this theatre, is a ballet expressly composed for Her Majesty's Theatre by the greatest of living playwrights, the celebrated M. Scribe. We have heard it asserted that by this ballet the season would begin. Rosati, the fascinating dancer and mime of last season, is already arrived, and with her the young Marie Taglioni, who has created a *furore* in Germany. Carlotta Grisi will arrive with a new ballet six weeks earlier than last year. Cerito and St. Leon will re-appear at their customary time, and the new ballet, *Des Cing Sens*, will be given as soon as it is possible. The new *corps de ballet* has been selected from amongst the most promising *danseuses* of that class of choreography. This year much is expected from the young *élèves* of the establishment, Thevenot, Julianne, Lamoureux, so warmly applauded last season, but now grown up to be accomplished dancers. To these and to that excellent dancer, Mdme. Petit, are added Emilie and Fanny Paschal; a young and interesting *danseuse*, Mdme. Ansene, &c.

The list we give, both of the vocal as well as the lyrical part of the company, is very incomplete, and we pass over many meritorious favourites; but we shall no doubt have an early opportunity of drawing further and more complete information from official sources. In the meantime the opening of Her Majesty's Theatre being the great event of the season, we have thought that, however premature, the information we could supply would interest the public. (1848.)

Miscellaneous.

THE LYRIC CLUB devoted last Monday evening to a performance of some of the works of Sir Henry Bishop, and the full appearance of the large room of the Whittington Tavern evinced

the high estimation in which this gifted composer is held by the public. The selection consisted of glees, rounds and choruses, the solo parts being sustained by the Misses Wells, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Howe, Mr. Donald King, Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Lawler. "Sleep Gentle Lady" in the first part, in which Mr. Wilkinson's bass voice told to great advantage, we specially mention as a perfect specimen of glee singing, and in the second part we noticed particularly the chorus "The Tiger couches in the Wood;" "Haste let us leave the Shore;" and the solo and chorus from the Maniac, "Welcome lady fair." In this last piece Miss Wells sang the solo with energy and precision and was warmly applauded. The quartet "The Silver Queen," is a beautiful specimen of Bishop's varying style, and but for the inefficiency of the bass, (an amateur we believe), would have been very finely sung. It is a pity that with the host of first rate professional glee singers always present at the Lyric concerts the solo part of any glee should be given to an amateur who at best cannot be expected to impart to the performance that finish which the experienced executant can alone supply. The concert concluded with the Tramp Chorus, a composition which will endure as an example of choral writing when most of the ephemeral productions of the present day have long since passed into oblivion. Mr. Longhurst presided at the piano and Mr. Shoubridge conducted with much ability. The next concert of the Club will take place on Monday the 8th of September.

THE EXHIBITION ORGAN.—On Saturday last Dr. Bexfield performed upon the Large Organ built by Gray and Davison and erected at the east end of the Great Exhibition. This instrument has 13 stops in the *Great Organ*, 9 in the *swell*, 8 in the *choir*, and 4 in the *pedals* including a 16 feet Bombarde of intense power. The following was Dr. Bexfield's Programme of performance. Prelude, extempore. Fugue, extempore. Dead March in "Saul," Handel. "Ground" composed in 1678, Purcell. Air, Mozart; arranged by W. R. Bexfield. Fugue in C major, No. 4, W. R. Bexfield. Representation of a Storm, W. R. Bexfield. Pedal Fugue in G minor, J. S. Bach. Hallelujah, Handel.

HAYDN'S FIRST STUDIES IN COMPOSITION.—"Less precocious than Mozart, who, at thirteen years produced an applauded opera, Haydn, at the same age, composed a mass, which honest Reuter very properly ridiculed. This sentence surprised the tyro, but, full of good sense at that early period, he was soon aware of its justice: he was sensible it was necessary to learn counterpoint, and the rules of melody, but from whom was he to learn them? Reuter did not teach the art of composition to the children of the choir, and never gave more than two lessons in it to Haydn. Mozart had an excellent master in his father, who was an esteemed performer on the violin. It was otherwise with poor Joseph, a friendless chorister in Vienna, who could only obtain lessons by paying for them, and who had not a half-penny. His father, notwithstanding his two trades, was so poor, that when Joseph had been robbed of his clothes, on his communicating his misfortune to his family, his father, making an effort, sent him six florins to refit his wardrobe. None of the masters in Vienna would give lessons *gratis* to a boy of the choir who had no patronage; and it is to this misfortune, perhaps, that Haydn owes his originality. All the poets have imitated Homer, who imitated no one; in this alone he has not been followed; and it is perhaps owing to this more especially, that he is the *great* poet whom the world admires. For my own part, I wish, my friend, that all the *courses of literature* were at the bottom of the ocean: they teach people of small abilities to produce works without faults, and nature makes them produce them without beauties. We are afterwards obliged to wade through these dull essays: our love for the arts is diminished thereby; while the want of instruction will, assuredly, never stop the course of a man whom nature has formed to be great. Look at Shakespere, at Cervantes; it is likewise the history of Haydn. A master might have prevented him from falling into some of the faults which he committed in the sequel, when he wrote for the church and the theatre; but he would certainly have been less original. He alone is the man of genius, who finds such delightful enjoyment in his art, that he pursues it in spite of obstacles. The torrent which is destined to become a mighty river, will

overthrew the dykes by which its course may be restrained. Like Jean Jacques Rousseau, he bought at a second-hand shop, some theoretical books, among others the *Treatise by Fux*, and he set about studying it with a perseverance, which the horrible obscurity of the rules could not overcome. Labouring alone, without a master, he made an infinite number of little discoveries, which were afterwards of use to him. Without either money, or fire, shivering with cold in his garret, and oppressed with sleep as he pursued his studies to a late hour of the night, by the side of a harpsicord out of repair, and falling to pieces in all parts, he was still happy. The days and years flew on rapid wing, and he has often said, that he never enjoyed such felicity at any other period of his life. Haydn's ruling passion was the love of music rather than the love of glory: and even in his desire of glory not a shadow of ambition was to be found. In composing music, he sought his own gratification rather than to furnish himself with the means of acquiring celebrity."—*Aurelian*.

VAUXHALL-GARDENS.—The foreigners, who were to be seen in large numbers last night at these gardens, will have formed a notion of what we are pleased to content ourselves with in the shape of public amusement neither flattering to our taste nor to our sense. The occasion was a special one, the entertainments being for the benefit of Mr. Wardell, the present lessee of the property, and unusual exertions were made for the attraction of the public. The chief feature relied upon seems to have been the ascent of three balloons at the same time, and accordingly at the hour appointed for this threefold event to come off, the greater portion of last night's visitors to the gardens had already assembled. Vauxhall by daylight is not the most cheering spectacle in the world, and perhaps the depressing effect of the dark and dismal entrance resembling some sepulchral vault, and the dreary prospect of close, heavy-looking boxes, melancholy trees, and seedy shrubs, contributed to give this first portion of the entertainments a stern and sombre cast, from which, but for the enlivening effects of a shower of rain, it would have been impossible to recover. A more dull and uninteresting sight than an ordinary balloon ascent, can scarcely be conceived, and what accession of interest or amusement is to be derived from seeing two, three, or more huge dingy machines go up in the air, with a few commonplace personages appended to them, it is not easy to perceive. With the exception of this proceeding, which was witnessed with due solemnity, and a few additional whirrings to the fireworks, with which, as far as the most steady and respectable portion of the public are concerned, the evening concludes, there was nothing to distinguish this from other Vauxhall nights. The measures taken for the amusement of the public have been the same for some years past, and require no special description. The performances in the circus and the display of fireworks, are the only occurrences during the evening which at all repay the weariness and bore of loitering about among staring refreshment boxes or gloomy alleys, rendered gloomier by coloured lamps disposed without taste, and scenic effects devoid of illusion. The musical arrangements, whether as regards what is called the concert—a set of inferior and vulgar performances—or the dance music, are worse than anything that has been heard in England since the revolution effected in such things by M. Jullien. If we are to have places of out-door amusement at all, it is high time that we should show ourselves capable of appreciating the taste and invention exhibited in similar establishments abroad, and with the large public ready to support anything conducted with spirit and liberality, there is no reason why the example of our neighbours should not even be surpassed.—*Times*.

SURREY ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.—There are few pleasanter evening lounges to those who have been living all day in the heat and smoke and dust of our huge Babylon, than these Gardens. The taste with which they are laid out, the completeness of their appointments, the care and attention in conducting the amusements, and the combination of instruction and entertainment which they afford, render them, perhaps, the most deservedly popular of recreations in or about London. The picture—which is the Temple of Janus, with the Colosseum, and the surrounding parts of ancient Rome—is interesting as well as beautiful. The orchestra is still under the direction of Jullien, the universal and powerful, whose name alone is a tower of strength and a load-

stone of attraction. Among the vocalists are Mr. Leffler and Miss Messent, and the musical novelty of the week has been a new song composed by Mr. Baker and sung by Miss Messent. The words are on the oft-repeated but ever fresh subject of the heart's first affection. It has a clear and graceful melody of the simplest ballad form, and, by the aid of the neat voice and delicate singing of the fair executant, obtained an encore, the mellow and birdy tones of Miss Messent's voice telling with pleasing effect in the open air. A catch, sung by the gentlemen, obtained like honour. Catches are comic part-songs, the words having cross readings. The wisdom of our ancestors held them in high repute, but as they were chiefly remarkable for their indelicate allusions and double meanings, and for their utter worthlessness as musical compositions, they have been dismissed to the dust-hole of oblivion, in which they are certainly destined to remain, in spite of their bearing the seal of the ancestral wisdom upon them. Two or three only have been preserved. The best is that in which four gentlemen dispute fiercely about the age of their Mistress. This was given on the present occasion, with due comic effect, by Mr. Leffler and his companions. The fireworks here are gorgeous and unique, and the early hour at which the amusements terminate, is not the least of the many claims which these gardens have on public support.

HAYDN'S LAST RESIDENCE.—"At the extremity of one of the suburbs of Vienna, on the side of the Imperial park of Schoubrunn, you find, near the barrier of Maria Hilf, a small unpaved street, so little frequented that it is covered with grass. About the middle of this street rises a humble dwelling, surrounded by perpetual silence. It is there, and not in the palace of Esterhazy, as you suppose, and as in fact he might if he wished; that the father of instrumental music resided; one of the men of genius of the eighteenth century, the golden age of music."—*Aurelian*.

THE LEATHER EAR.

Men of true piety, they know not why,
Music with all its sacred powers decry.
Music itself (not its abuse) condemn,
For good or bad is just the same to them,
But let them know they quite mistake the case,
Defect of nature for excess of grace;
And while they reprobate th' harmonious art,
Blamed, we excuse, and candidly assert,
The fault is in their ear, not in their upright heart.—

Extracted from —, by Aurelian.

HAYDN IN HIS OLD AGE.—You knock at the door: it is opened to you with a cheerful smile by a worthy little old woman, his housekeeper; you ascend short flight of wooden stairs, and find in the second chamber of a very simple apartment a tranquil old man, sitting at a desk, absorbed in the melancholy sentiment that life is escaping from him, and so complete a nonentity with respect to every thing besides, that he stands in need of visitors to recall to him what he has once been. When he sees any one enter a pleasing smile appears upon his lips, a tear moistens his eyes, his countenance recovers its animation, his voice becomes clear, he recognises his guest, and talks to him of his early years, of which he has a much better recollection than of his latter ones; you think that the artist still exists; but soon he relapses before your eyes into his habitual state of lethargy and sadness.—*Aurelian*.

THE ALPINE GOATHERD.—The goatherd of the Alps, free as the air he breathes, runs through the gamut at a breath; and, with a firm and powerful voice, calls up the sweet reverberations of the rocks by which he is environed. Without being restrained by rules, to which he is a stranger, and which would but impede the spontaneous effusions of his soul, he prefers those tones that fancy inspires, and which his organs seem to have the natural gift to modulate. He rarely repeats them in a manner exactly the same, even if solicited to do so. Inspired by the scenery, and the circumstances by which he is surrounded, and guided by a sort of instinctive talent, he creates new sounds, and new modulations, and varies his melody without being conscious that his song is beyond the rivalry of art.—*Extracted from —, by Aurelian.*

FRANCIS JOSEPH HAYDN was born on the last day of March, 1732, at Rohran, a small town, fifteen leagues distant from Vienna. His father was a cartwright; and his mother, before her marriage, had been cook in the family of Count Harrach, the lord of the village. The father of Haydn united to his trade of a cartwright, the office of parish sexton. He had a fine tenor voice, was fond of his organ, and of music in general. On one of those journeys which the artizans of Germany often undertake, being at Frankfort-on-the-Main, he learned to play a little on the harp; and in holidays, after church, he used to take his instrument, while his wife sung. The birth of Joseph did not alter the habits of this peaceful family. The little domestic concert returned every week, and the child, standing before his parents, with two pieces of wood in his hands, one of which served him as a violin, and the other as a bow, constantly accompanied his mother's voice. Haydn, loaded with years and with glory, has often, in my presence, recalled the simple airs which she sung; so deep an impression had these first melodies made on his soul, which was all music! A cousin of the cartwright, whose name was Frank, a schoolmaster at Hamburg, came to Rohan one Sunday, and assisted at the trio. He remarked that the child, then scarcely six years old, beat the time with astonishing exactitude and precision. This Frank was well acquainted with music, and proposed to his relations to take little Joseph to his house and to teach him. They accepted the offer with joy, hoping to succeed more easily in getting Joseph into holy orders, if he should understand music."—*Aurelian.*

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